



## **Change in rail bond language should appeal to more voters**

### **Wording should enhance prospects for its passage.**

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A tweak in the language of the November high-speed rail bond would widen the scope of spending under the measure, and might delay the construction of portions of the Valley route. But it's still a good idea.

As currently written, the \$9.9 billion bond would be spent only on the San Francisco to Los Angeles segment, which includes the Valley. A bill introduced in the Assembly, with the backing of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, would expand that to every segment of the 700-mile system.

The high-speed rail effort is crucial to the Valley for economic and environmental reasons. But widening the scope of the spending should draw more support from voters all over Southern California, which will be necessary for the bond's passage. That's why this is good news for the Valley. It may delay some aspects of rail service hereabouts, but that's a great deal better than not having it at all.

It's also encouraging that Gov. Schwarzenegger is involved in this process. The governor has gone back and forth on the issue of high-speed rail, praising it to the skies in an op-ed piece he wrote for The Bee last May, then throwing up daunting roadblocks at other times.

Quentin Kopp, a retired judge and former state senator who chairs the High Speed Rail Authority, the governing board for the project, has been trying to recruit the governor to serve as a co-chair of the campaign to pass the bond measure. So far, he's had little success.

That's too bad. Having Schwarzenegger on board in a high-profile role would greatly enhance the prospects for passing the bond measure, which could face a good deal of skepticism from voters in a year of fiscal crisis in California.

But it's precisely such times when we need a clear and aggressive vision for the future. The high-speed rail project would create a generation of high-paying construction jobs, boosting the economy. And it would take thousands of cars off the state's freeways, helping clean the air and address global climate change. It would also ease ever-increasing congestion at airports.

Those benefits make high-speed rail an opportunity too good to miss.